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## REV. THOMAS BRAY AND HIS AMERICAN LIBRARIES

WE are accustomed to think of the New England States as peculiarly the seat of learning in colonial days, and of the South as inhabited by men who cared little for reading and had little opportunity to read, even if they wished to do so. We all know of the early libraries attached to the New England colleges, and of the remarkable development of literary tastes produced by the diffusion of printed material in the northern colonies. To most men, also, the influence of Franklin and his Philadelphia Library is familiar; but it seldom occurs to us that in the provincial period there were libraries of any importance south of Mason and Dixon's line. Yet when we consider the fact that the southern gentry frequently received the best education that England could give, and that, when the Revolutionary period came, they showed themselves remarkably well versed in history and politics, we should be put upon inquiry to ascertain whether we have not overlooked the southern libraries in our survey of the social life of colonial days. We would not maintain that the love of reading pervaded the various classes of society as extensively in the South as in the North; but there is no doubt that the southern gentry possessed excellent private libraries, and that the first public library movement in North America found its chief field in the southern group of colonies.

The Virginia planters had books of their own, beside those furnished by the library of William and Mary College at the colonial capital. As is shown by the interesting lists from old inventories, which President L. G. Tyler is publishing in the *William and Mary College Quarterly*, many of the colonial mansions along the banks of the James and the Rappahannock possessed considerable and varied collections of books. In the other southern states we have not such published data to go upon, but in Maryland and South Carolina, at least, a similar condition of affairs must have existed. In all the southern colonies, however, save Georgia, which was settled after the period of his activity, the first great impulse towards forming public libraries was given by Rev. Thomas Bray. Had his efforts been made on

a broader basis, and had they met with stronger support, Massachusetts would have been much over a century behind Maryland in the success of her libraries, as she is chronologically in the enactment of a state library law.

Edwards writes, in his *Memoirs of Libraries*, that "the early history of Libraries in America derives a special interest for Englishmen, from the fact that it is pre-eminently a record of reciprocal good offices between some of the best men of both countries. There is not a library in the United States, of the age of a century and upwards, which does not treasure on its roll of benefactors the name of many a liberal-minded Englishman who saw that, in lending what furtherance he could to the cause of learning in the rising commonwealth, he was at once discharging a plain duty and sowing the seeds of an abundant harvest, of which his own posterity would surely gather a portion, though they might never behold the fields in which it was to grow." This statement is worthy of quotation, because it emphasizes the fact, which we are apt to forget, that the active interest of the mother country had much to do with the supply of books for the colonial libraries.

The first library in British North America which belonged to any public institution was the gift of an Englishman. This was the library attached to the college projected at Henrico, Va., but given up after the Indian massacre of 1623. To this institution was left, by the will of Mr. Thomas Burgrave, late minister in Virginia, a library valued at 100 marks. An unknown giver in England sent over for this library, in 1620, St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, "Master Perkins his works, and an exact map of America," and in 1621 added to his gift "a small Bible with a cover richly wrought, a great church Bible, the Booke of Common Prayer, and other bookes." The two donations were valued at £10. That this was the first public library in the British colonies is a moral certainty.

Thomas Bray was born at Marton, in Shropshire, in 1656, and, after a long and useful life, died in London in 1730. A recent writer speaks of him as "a striking instance of what a man can effect, without any extraordinary genius and without any special influence. It would be difficult to point to any one who has done more real and enduring service to the church of England. He cannot be reckoned among our great divines, but his writings produced more immediate practical results than those of greater divines have done."

Bray took his bachelor's degree from All Souls' College, Oxford,

in 1678, and, having entered the ministry, was successful in several pastorates. As an able clergyman, he attracted the notice of Bishop Compton of London, who selected him as commissary of Maryland in 1696. Four years previously, Maryland, which had recently become a royal province, was divided into parishes by the governor and assembly, and the Anglican Church was established in the province. A maintenance for the clergy was provided from a tax on tobacco, and the Bishop of London was asked to send over a commissary to supervise the religious establishment of the province. This office Bray accepted, but was obliged to remain in England for the present, as the king had vetoed the Maryland law. It therefore seemed wise to await the passage of another act framed to meet the royal objections. While waiting in England he was engaged in seeking out clergymen to be sent over as soon as the new act should be passed. He found he could only get poor men who were not able to buy books for their libraries, and this determined him to inaugurate a system of parochial libraries in Maryland.

He had gained prominence at this time by the publication of a volume of *Lectures upon the Church Catechism*, and quickly found supporters in his scheme. He insisted that, if he served as commissary, the bishops must assist him in this plan, telling them that such libraries would be the best encouragement to studious and sober men to undertake the service. About this time, though little able to bear the expense, he took the degrees of B.D. and D.D. at Oxford, that he might be better fitted to sustain the dignity of commissary. He also issued printed "Proposals for the Incouragement and Promoting of Religion and Learning in the Foreign Plantations," in which he sets forth a scheme for a parochial library in every parish in America.<sup>1</sup> His idea is that

<sup>1</sup> In the preface to his anonymous *Brief Account of the Life of the Reverend Mr. John Rawlet*, London, 1728, Bray tells how such designs came to his mind. Rawlet, he says, left his library to his native town of Tamworth, with provision that any clergyman of Tamworth or the neighborhood might borrow books from it. "The Experience of its Benefit gave a Hint in forming the Design of Parochial and Lending Libraries, as well at Home, as . . . in the Plantations Abroad. . . . The first Hint indeed given of the Usefulness, indeed of the plain Necessity of such a Design, was upon another Occasion, viz. On being desired by the Relations of a Neighbouring Clergyman then lately Deceas'd, to look over his Books in Order to their Sale, it was surprising to find him so poorly furnished therewith. . . . I found, that whilst Living, he enjoy'd the Use of Two very Considerable Libraries in his Parish. . . . It was but Natural on such Occasion to Reflect, as on the one Hand, on the Impossibility of many Thousand Vicars and Curates, their enjoying such an Advantage . . . ; So on the other, the utter Impossibility they should be able to furnish themselves therewith. . . . Upon this Observation and Reflection indeed, was form'd something of a Plan of making such Provision both of *Parochial and Lending Libraries*, before I became acquainted with Mr. Rawlett's, and

each parochial library shall be strictly for reference and "shall be Affixed in a decent and large Room of the Parsonage-House of such Parish, there to remain to the sole Use of the Minister thereof for the time being, unto all future Generations, and to be as *unalienable* as any other Rights and Dues of the Church." It is directed that "in every Book, on the one side of the Cover, shall be letter'd these words, *Sub Auspiciis Willielmi III.* on the other side the Name of the Parish to which these Books do belong: ex. gr. *E. Bibliotheca de Mary-Town: E. Bibliotheca de James-Town, &c.*" This was done "for further Security, to preserve them from Loss or Imbezelment and that they may be known where-ever they are found," and, by these signs, the writer has known many of them, reposing in distant corners of libraries. The minister is to be responsible for any books "Imbezelled or Lost by his fault," and must account for them annually to the churchwardens, and triennially to the commissary. To obtain books for these libraries, requests are to be made to the "learned authors" now living, to give copies of their books, and to others, especially "merchants to the foreign plantations," to give money, of all of which there shall be a full account published.

This tract was approved in a letter, signed by both archbishops and five (afterward twelve) bishops, which stated that they looked "upon the design, as what will tend very much to propagate Christian knowledge in the Indies, as it will, in all likelihood, invite some of the more studious and virtuous persons out of the universities to undertake the ministry in those parts and will be a means of rendering them useful, when they are there." Therefore, they promise to help "cheerfully towards promoting these Parochial Libraries," and "hope that many pious persons will be found, who out of love to religion and learning, will also contribute thereto."

Armed with this endorsement, Bray was very successful in collecting money and books. As he worked on, the idea grew greatly upon him, and in 1697 he published *An Essay towards promoting all Necessary and Useful Knowledge, both divine and*

the same was Communicated to such of our Neighbouring Brethren, as were sensible of the Value of Books, who approv'd the Design, and wish'd it a good Success; but it remain'd as a mere Project in Speculation only, till several of the Clergy by Experience tasted of the Benefit of Mr. *Razoulett's* Library, out of which they could now and then Borrow the Book we wanted to peruse. And indeed it was usual for some of us to Ride even Ten Miles to Borrow out of it the Book we had Occasion for. It was this Experience which encourag'd, which invigorated the Publishing an *Essay*, Printed about Thirty Years since; and which, Blessed be God, has had such Success; That, together with those, the *Missionary Clergy* in our Plantations Abroad have been provided with, there are at this Day in all, at least Hundred *Parochial* and *Lending Libraries* Rais'd and Fix'd upon that Plan."

*human, in all the Parts of His Majesty's Dominions, both at home and abroad.* In this work he puts forth "Proposals to the Gentry and Clergy of this Kingdom for purchasing lending Libraries in all the Deanaries of England, and Parochial Libraries for Maryland, Virginia, and other of the Foreign Plantations." He gives a catalogue of titles of books proper for such libraries, which fills six pages of the book, and includes a selection of books in all branches of literature; though, of course, theology receives the greatest attention. The first apostle of the free circulating library tells us that he no longer limits the usefulness of his libraries to the clergy; but hopes also to provide for the gentry of the country, and to allow them to carry the books to their homes. "Standing libraries," he writes, "will signifie little in the Country, where Persons must ride some miles to look into a Book; such Journeys being too expensive of Time and Money: But *Lending Libraries*, which come home to 'em without Charge, may tolerably well supply the Vacancies in their own Studies, till such time as these *Lending* may be improv'd into *Parochial Libraries*." In this plan, the parochial library was to be mainly a "standing" one, the decanal or the colonial library being the "lending" one, as a substitute for and supplement to the former. "And, whereas it may be objected, that the Books will be so often Borrow'd, that it will be hard for any one to have the Book he wants, I am so far from being much concern'd to answer it, that I heartily wish the great Use and frequent Borrowing of Books out of these Libraries, may make it a real Objection." These are words exactly in the spirit of the modern library, and, like a modern librarian, he suggests, "there being several Authors specify'd in such a Library as I design, upon most of the Subjects, if one be not to be had, Satisfaction may be sought in the mean time from another."

His argument, often quaint but always sensible, is worthy of further quotation.

Knowledge is the fairest Ornament of the Soul of Man; and whosoever is Endow'd therewith, let it be of any kind, which is not mischievous, fails not of Esteem amongst all sorts of Persons. This is certain, that Knowledge does more to distinguish the Possessors of it, than Titles, Riches, or great Places: For, tho' these Men may command the Cap and the Knee, and extort some outward kind of Reverence from Inferiors; yet the Man of Understanding is he, who is inwardly and truly respected, whilst the Gaudy, but Empty Beau, is no other than the Scorn and Derision of all who Converse with him. But especially a Man is then Esteemed for his Knowledge, if his Understanding is Eminent in things laudable, and of great Weight and Moment, for whatever is greatly useful is highly valu-

able. And such is the Knowledge which I am endeavoring to provide for. . . . I hope, though this Design seems more immediately directed to the Service of the Clergy, yet Gentlemen, Physicians and Lawyers will perceive they are not neglected in it. . . . And indeed those Persons of Quality, whose Eldest Sons being commonly brought up to no Employment, have a great deal of Time lying upon their Hands, seem to me to be as nearly concern'd as any to favour it. For many of these young Gentlemen, when removed from the Universities . . . residing all their Life-time in Countries, where they can meet with no Books to employ themselves in reading, and whereby they may be able to improve the Talent they have there gain'd; they do thereupon too commonly become not so conspicuous for their Excellent Knowledge, and Morals, as will be ever expected from Men of Rank and Station in their Country. And when they happen into one another's Company, for want of Good Sense, are forc'd too often to fill up their Discourse, and maintain a Conversation, in the Porterly Language of Swearing and Obscenity.

We obtain further particulars of the plans from an unpublished tract of Dr. Bray in the library of Sion College, London, entitled, *Bibliothecæ Americanæ Quadripartitæ viz: I. Generales, Sive Bibliotheca Regia Annopolitana; II. Provinciales; III. Decanales; IV. Parochiales, or Catalogues of the Libraries sent into the Several Provinces of America.*

In this tract, of which the Lenox Library has a copy, and which apparently is the initial part of an unfinished work, we are told that

The Design of Writing and Reading Bookes is to Improve Knowledge. And the Tendency of good Books is to Advance necessary and usefull Knowledge. And Libraries, being a Collection of many Books written upon various Subjects, the End of them is to give Requisite Helps to Considerable Attainments in All the Parts of necessary and Usefull Knowledge.

Now the Persons whose Chief Business it is to be men of Knowledge are the Clergy, because they are to instruct others; And it is impossible they should be Able to Communicate to others, what they are not themselves first become Masters of.

It seems best to quote his own words; for they show clearly what his idea was, how far in advance of anything hitherto conceived of, and how limited in some directions, especially in the aristocratic nature of the constituency for which he labored. Yet when ignorance was so general among the common people as it was in England, why should he think that they would be apt to take advantage of the privileges of public libraries?

In the work from which we have just quoted, he goes on to

give the first American library classification, the predecessor of those devised by later librarians for the arrangement of their collections of books. His "Compleat Scheme of the severall Sciences or Parts of necessary and Usefull Knowledge" is strange enough in many ways. It runs as follows: Knowledge is either divine or humane. In the former he includes theology, which deals with divine things and our well-being in a future state, and its appendages, metaphysics and pneumatology. The second main division, humanity, is concerned with our well-being in this life. "Most Humane Sciences" (he cautiously avoids saying *all*) "may be Reduced to such as are conversant, First, about Things, Secondly, Words." The sciences dealing with things are: "Ethicks," about ourselves, to study our well-being and the best improvement of all our faculties, especially of the rational. Appendant to this is "Œconomicks." Next come politics and law, as they deal with "ourselves as members of Humane Society." Then follows history with its appendages, geography, voyages, and travels, dealing with "the world and it's various and great occurrences." From these we naturally pass to physiology, natural philosophy, or natural history, dealing with the "Frame of Nature." This again leads us to medicine, chemistry, and pharmacopy, with their appendages, anatomy and chirurgery, all of which reduce "the Knowledge of Nature to the Chiefest Use and Service of Human Life." We now make what seems a wide leap to mathematics, which treat of the "Number, Measures, and Proportion of Things." Last of the sciences of things, and seemingly far out of place, are trade and commerce, which apply the fore-mentioned to the greatest advantage of the public, especially travellers.

We now turn to the sciences concerned with words and find that grammar is the first, busying itself with the "Elements, Regulation, and Property of Language." It is followed by rhetoric, instructing "to speak Elegantly and Persuasively"; poetry, teaching "to speak Movingly and Delightfully"; and logic, giving rules "to Reason Conclusively." This ends the general classification; but we are told that there are many "particular Sciences of great name, conteyned under some of these General Heads, as Arithmetick, Geometry, Astronomy &c., under the Genus of Mathesis; but these will come under Consideration, when each General Head is drawn out into all it's Particulars."

From this work we further learn that in Maryland Dr. Bray hoped to group each five parishes together, as a deanery, with a decanal library, and we obtain a new statement of the relative spheres of parochial and provincial libraries. In the former he



hopes to place the Holy Scriptures, with some good commentaries upon the same, and a few good authors, both upon the general doctrine and the particular articles of the covenant of grace. As to books not theological, we must be contented to have them, except a very few, only in our provincial libraries, which indeed ought to be more than ordinarily furnished with books of law, mathematics, natural history, and medicine, for the use and improvement, not only of the clergy, but of the whole country. The catalogues of nineteen or twenty libraries already sent out are given in the manuscript.

This courageous man, who had no financial provision assigned for his support, and who had to dispose of his own small effects to raise money for his plans, had the most boundless confidence in the success of his endeavors. So he writes, "Instead of libraries for Maryland, the bounds of my first design, I shall not only extend my endeavors for the supply of all the English colonies in America therewith; but can most willingly be a missionary into every one of those provinces, to fix and settle them therein, when they are obtained, being so fully persuaded of the great benefit of these kind of libraries that I should not think 'em too dear a purchase even at the hazard of my life, being to both church and clergy a most devoted and humble servant."

In 1697 Dr. Bray published *Bibliotheca Parochialis: or, a Scheme of such Theological Heads both General and Particular, as are more peculiarly Requisite to be well Studied by every Pastor of a Parish, together with a Catalogue of Books which may be Read upon each of these points*. A second and much enlarged edition appeared in 1707, with the title: *Bibliotheca Parochialis, &c., or a Scheme of such Theological and Other Heads, as seem requisite to be perus'd, or Occasionally consulted, by the Reverend Clergy, together with the Books which may be profitably Read on each of those Points, In Order to promote the Forming and Erecting Libraries of three Degrees, viz. General, Decanal or Lending, and Parochial, throughout Her Majesty's Dominions, both at Home and Abroad*. In this a second volume was promised, to contain an account which should show "how far the design has been hitherto advanced and how practicable it may be to perfect the same." This, unfortunately, never appeared. News of the plan which Dr. Bray was advocating soon reached Maryland, and the governor, Francis Nicholson, who was ever a stanch friend of education, proposed to the assembly that "some part of the revenue given toward furnishing arms and ammunition for the use of the province be laid out for the purchase of books to be

added to the books, which had been presented by the King, to form a library in the port of Annapolis and that a portion of the public revenue be applied to the enlargement thereof and that the library should be placed in the office and under the care of the commissary of the province, permitting all persons, desirous to study or read the books, to have access thereto under proper restrictions." This, as far as I can learn, is the first recommendation by any public official, that a part of the public funds be applied to the support of a free public library.

Governor Nicholson did not succeed in obtaining an appropriation, but on June 11, 1697, the assembly passed resolutions of thanks to Dr. Bray for the libraries, which they "understand you are taking Care to Collect for us," and which they "are sensible will be the best Inducement to Pious and Sober Ministers to come, and live amongst us ; And will be the Cause of such Education to be given, both to our own People, and Native Indians, as will best promote the Interest of Religion and Morality in this Province."

This gratitude of the Marylanders found a parallel in South Carolina, whose legislature, on November 25, 1698, adopted resolutions, in which they stated, "We can not but now think it our Duty, to make it our Endeavours to encourage Religion and Learning amongst us, according to the best of our Ability, seeing that your self (though a Stranger) have been so kind and generous, as to set the first example towards the promotion of so Good and Necessary a Work."

In 1699 Bray formed a voluntary society whose objects included the libraries, charity schools, and missions, both to the colonists and the heathen. This was the beginning of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, now so venerable and well known. Bray's success in getting contributions for his libraries had been marked and, in 1699, just before he sailed for Maryland, he wrote that his four years of labor had resulted in the sending of £2400 worth of books into the plantations, "whereby Thirty Libraries have been already advanc'd, and some of them to a considerable Perfection, . . . and a Foundation is also laid by some few Books, of 70 Libraries more." According to a table which he gives, there were libraries then established: one each in Boston, in New York City, East Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Charleston, S. C., while there were sixteen in Maryland. Besides these libraries of Dr. Bray, the only public ones then in the British colonies, as far as is known, were those at Boston, at Harvard College, and at William and Mary College.

When all things were ready, Dr. Bray embarked for Maryland

on December 16, 1699, and, with characteristic zeal, was able to found three libraries at three ports where the vessel touched in England. Arriving in Maryland, he made himself acquainted with the state of things there; but soon felt he could do more for the establishing of the Anglican Church in Maryland, if he returned home, and left the colony, never to return. The crown had twice rejected the bill to establish the Church of England in Maryland. A third bill to that effect was approved, largely owing to a printed memorial of Dr. Bray's composition.

In 1700 there was a new development in the library movement. Layman's libraries were sent out, whose books were "to be Lent or Given at the Discretion of the Minister." The books contained in these collections were exclusively religious, and many tracts were included. Of some of the titles on the list, a hundred copies were sent to a single parish. Dr. Bray sums up the classes of books in these libraries as follows. the Scriptures; works for the instruction of catechumens; works for the use of adults, "including discourses to be read on Sundays in Large families and such especially as are remote from churches"; works to "promote the reformation of manners"; works to "prepare adults for the worthy receiving of both the sacraments"; and works adapted to "recover to the unity of the Church all such as have gone astray into Heresy and Schism, *i.e.* Quakers, Papists, and Dissenters."

For such purposes, books were also to be placed in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Annapolis, and Williamsburg for the use of George Keith, to be placed in public houses, and to be given to the "chief governors" and the "best disposed magistrates." Dr. Bray and his associates never lost sight of the religious side of his plan, and nowhere does it appear more plainly than here.

On Bray's return to England he found the work of his society had so increased that it seemed better to constitute one of its departments into a separate society; and thus the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts was established in 1701. Apparently he now felt that he could do more good in his benevolent enterprises by remaining in England, and so he accepted the living of St. Botolph Without, Aldgate, in 1706, and remained in charge of it until his death. He devoted himself to the labors of his parish, but did not forget his libraries. In 1709 he had the pleasure of seeing an act of parliament passed "for the better preservation of parochial Libraries in England." After his return he published several works in behalf of his favorite scheme. In 1702 *Bibliotheca Catechetica or the Country Curates Library* appeared, and in 1700 he issued *Several Circular Letters to the*

*Clergy of Maryland*, with "A Course of Catechising to be observed in the Plantations, consisting of Books more particularly fitted for the Use of the Three several Classes of Catechumens there, in order to Season the growing Generation with the Principles of Piety and Virtue." Near the end of his life, in 1726, his interest in libraries being still unflagging, he published *Primordia Bibliothecaria*, in which he gives "several schemes of parochial libraries and a method laid down to proceed by a gradual progression from strength to strength, from a collection not much exceeding in value £1 to £100." Three years before this last book appeared he had been attacked with a dangerous illness, and, feeling that his life was uncertain in its duration, he nominated several persons to aid him and succeed him in his work. Thus arose "Dr. Bray's Associates for founding clerical libraries and supporting negro schools." This association still exists and yearly publishes reports of its activity.

We cannot sum up the result of Dr. Bray's labors better than by a quotation from his biography, published in 1746 and entitled, *Publick Spirit illustrated in the Life and Designs of the Reverend Thomas Bray, D.D.* We are there told that "His only Comfort was, that the Libraries he had begun and advanc'd more or less in all the Provinces on the Continent, and in most of the Islands of America, as also in the Factories in Africa, did not only serve the then Ministers with whom they were first sent out, but by the Care of some of the Governments, and by Acts of Assembly, settling the Rules he had prescribed for their Use and Preservation, they might be also of Advantage to many succeeding Generations."

We have paid little attention to Dr. Bray's other good deeds, as we are mainly dealing with his influence on the American colonies. Let us now see how extensive were his services to the colonies in the way of furnishing them with libraries. As we might expect, the absence of the Anglican Church from New England caused Dr. Bray to pay little attention to that part of the country, and only three libraries were sent there.

An account of that in Boston, which numbered 221 volumes, was written by Rev. H. W. Foote of King's Chapel for the Massachusetts Historical Society, and was printed in its *Proceedings*. From this we learn that the vestry of that church, on October 2, 1698, ordered twelve boxes for these books. The books had been received some time before, and their receipt acknowledged on July 25 in a letter to Henry Compton, Bishop of London. They were placed in the rector's study and kept by his successors until the

Revolution. During that period some of the books were lost, but those remaining were deposited in the Theological Library in 1807. In July, 1823, they were deposited in the Boston Athenæum and distributed according to their subjects. Thus they remained until 1881, when they were gathered together and placed in a separate case. The original library, which Dr. Foote<sup>1</sup> pronounces "an admirable collection of the best books for the use of a scholarly theologian of the Church of England," contained sixty-six works in folio in ninety-six volumes, twenty-one in quarto in twenty-six volumes, fifty-seven in octavo in eighty-three volumes, and six in duodecimo in six volumes. Valuable works were added from time to time, so that, in spite of losses, there were 251 volumes in 1807. The Athenæum received 214, six of which have since been lost. Of the present number 110 still bear the royal stamp and the words "De Bibliotheca de Boston."

Another New England library was sent in care of Rev. Dr. Bethune on October 19, 1700, to Rhode Island. This parochial library contained twenty-three folios, twelve quartos, and forty-two octavos. All were on theological subjects save a geography, two dictionaries, a Greek grammar, and a book on gardening. With these, forty-two theological books and one hundred pastoral letters were sent as a "Layman's Library." A year later three folios, five quartos, and four octavos were added — all on theological subjects. New York colony received two libraries: a large one of 211 volumes for the city of that name, and a small one of ten volumes for Albany. Perth Amboy, in New Jersey, received thirty volumes, while to Philadelphia were sent 327. To the several parishes of Virginia 136 books were sent, and £50 worth to the College there. South Carolina received 225 volumes, and the receipt of these books led to the first American library law which I have been able to find.

This act, passed in 1700, shows clearly that the colonial libraries were intended as lending libraries for the public at large. The books of the library, which Dr. Bray has sent over for the public use, are to be put in the custody of the Charleston minister for the time being, who shall pay double the value of any book "embezeled." In case of his death or resignation, the churchwardens are to keep the library, until a successor be chosen; take stock of the books, and give notice within twenty days if any books are "wanting or damnified." To manage the affairs of the library, the General Assembly is to appoint nine commissioners,

<sup>1</sup> He wrongly thinks Bray got his library idea from the gift of these books by the king to Rev. Samuel Miles of King's Chapel.

whose places may be filled by the governor, in case vacancies occur when the assembly is not in session. These commissioners are to appraise the books and to examine them yearly on November 5. To prepare for this examination, all books must be on the shelves of the library by the 26th of October.

Seven catalogues are to be made of the books in the library, and to be bestowed as follows: one to the Lords Proprietors in England, one to the Lord Bishop of London, one to Dr. Bray, one to be recorded in the provincial secretary's office, one to be in the custody of the commissioners, one to be in the custody of the churchwardens (on both of which last the incumbent of the church shall sign a receipt for the books when he enters upon his office), and one "to be fairly entered" in a book kept for that purpose, and to be kept by the incumbent in the said library for any person to read.

The use of the library was absolutely unrestricted. "Any Inhabitant" of the Colony "may borrow any Book out of the Library, giving a note under his Hand, acknowledging the Receipt and promising to return it: if a folio in 4 months, Quartos in 2 Months, Octavoes or under in one month, upon the penalty of paying 3 times the value, in case of a failure, or damning the book." The incumbent shall enter these receipts in a book kept for that purpose, and shall enter the word "returned" when books are brought back, being careful not to cross or blot the book.

People in South Carolina were not always as careful to preserve the books from injury as they should have been, and so we find a supplemental act passed in 1712. From this we learn positively that the books were actually circulated among the people, and that the "unrestrained liberty hath already proved very prejudicial to the said Library, several of the books being lost and others damnified." To prevent this for the future and preserve the library, "it will be necessary to lodge a discretional power in the Person, that doth keep the same, to deny any Person the loan of any book, that he shall think will not take care of the same." It is, therefore, enacted "that in a case any Person shall desire to borrow any book out of the said Provincial Library, which the keeper of the said Library hath just reason to think will not take care of the said book and return the same in time, that, in such case, the said Library Keeper may refuse such person the Loan of any book."

Several details respecting the organization of the Board of Commissioners are included in the provisions of the act. They are

now ordered to meet at least twice yearly, to inspect the books. They have the further power conferred upon them of supervising the several parochial libraries which have been given by the Society for Propagating the Gospel, Sir Francis Nicholson, and other charitable persons. In fact, they were made an early American state library commission, and were given larger powers than any subsequent one has had, being authorized to appoint persons to catalogue the parochial libraries, to put the catalogues in the same places as those of the provincial library, and appoint trustees for them.

In North Carolina there was a library sent over by Dr. Bray to Bathtown, St. Thomas's Parish, in Pamlico. This library was sent on December 2, 1700, and numbered thirty-eight folios, nineteen quartos, and 109 octavos. Its contents were much more varied than those of the average library. There were eleven works of history and travel, two geographies, five dictionaries, three works each on mathematics, natural history, heraldry, biography, and law, four ancient classics, the same number of works on grammar and language, three books of essays, two books on sports, and one each on medicine, mythology, and poetry. This last was *Hudibras*. With the parochial library was sent a layman's library numbering 870 volumes and pamphlets. Albemarle Parish, in the same colony, received a layman's library about the same time, but apparently no parochial library.

The colonial legislature passed in 1715 an act for securing St. Thomas's Library. This also was a free circulating library, out of which "the inhabitants of Beaufort Precinct shall have liberty to borrow any book." Receipts must be given, and the time allowed to retain a book is the same as in South Carolina. A "fairly written" catalogue of the books shall be made, one copy of which shall be kept in the secretary's office in the province, a second by the library commissioners, in which the librarian shall sign a receipt for the books, and a third in the library, "that so any Person may know what Books are contained therein." The library keeper was appointed by a Board of Commissioners, and this is the first legal provision, as far as I know, for the appointment of any person especially as librarian of any library in the United States. All previous to this time were librarians because they held other offices, as clergymen or college presidents; this library keeper was the first selected primarily for that office, and even he was to hold office only when there was no incumbent in the parish. In case of his death, the churchwardens of Beaufort Precinct are to take the books and be answerable for them to the

commissioners. Only fire or unavoidable accident should excuse the keeper from accountability when books were lost or damaged. On Easter Monday of each year the commissioners should meet and take stock of the books. The dignity of their office is shown by the character of the persons appointed as commissioners. They were the governor, councillors, chief justice, secretary, speaker, and attorney-general of the province, the members of the precinct court, and ten other citizens mentioned by name, whose places should be filled by co-optation.

We have reserved Maryland for the last in our survey of the libraries founded by Dr. Bray. It received the largest share of his bounty. The provincial library at Annapolis numbered 1095 volumes and was then the most considerable public collection of books in British America. It was kept in the State House until that building was burnt in 1704, and was then removed to King William School. When St. John's College was founded after the Revolution and King William School was merged in it, the books passed to St. John's College Library. In 1876 there were still to be found 188 folios and 210 quartos in the collection, and the number preserved there to-day is about the same. As this library was certainly sent over before any other provincial one, we have in it probably the first free circulating library in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

The province passed no special act concerning the Annapolis library, but in 1704 established the first library system in the British North American possessions, by the passage of an "act for securing the Parochial Libraries of this Province." By this act, the governor was empowered to appoint one or more library visitors "to report the true estate" of the libraries to the "Governor and Council, that they may make orders to cause every one concerned about the said libraries to do their duties to the effectual preserving of them." This was the second state library commission in the colonies. Each library should be in the custody of the minister of the parish, who should give duplicate receipt for the books, one to the governor and council and one to his vestry, who were to visit the library twice a year, sue the minister if he "embezels" a book, and be responsible for the library during a vacancy in the parish.

There were thirty parishes in Maryland, and Dr. Bray gave nearly every parish a library, ranging in size from the great one

<sup>1</sup> Proof that the books were circulated and, also, not always returned, is found in the fact that Governor Hart, on taking inventory in 1714, discovered that several books were missing. The Assembly, on learning of this, ordered the several sheriffs to publish notices commanding all persons, having books from "the public Library," to return them.



at Annapolis to small ones of ten books, which were allotted to nine small parishes.<sup>1</sup> Only five received over one hundred books and only two others over fifty. The catalogue of the library presented to St. James Herring Creek Parish, in Anne Arundel County, has been preserved and printed by a former pastor, Rev. T. C. Gambrall, in his *Church Life in Colonial Maryland*. This library numbered 150 volumes and was fourth in size of those in the province. In 1698, the first part of it was received and consisted of twenty works in folio, eighteen in quarto, and eighty-seven in octavo. By classes, it was thus divided: religious works 111, history and geography twelve, language two, natural science one, ancient classics one, law one, mathematics one. Probably this is a fair sample of the variety of books found in the parochial libraries; it shows how predominant the religious aspect was in them. In 1703 the parish received a second invoice, chiefly composed of a layman's library. In 1709 James Rigbie, one of the parishioners, left by will £20 sterling to the parish "to be laid out in good and godly books."

Nanjemoy Parish, in Charles County, had the only other library of which a catalogue is preserved. It contained twenty-five folios, five quartos, and twenty-nine octavos and duodecimos, which were sent over May 6, 1701, and apparently ten more of unknown size, sent over at an earlier date. In the later invoice were five historical works, two each on mathematical and philosophical subjects, and one each on politics, education, language, and gardening. The rest were religious. A layman's library of 982 numbers was also sent to Nanjemoy. We have no record to show us whether such layman's libraries were sent to every parish in the province, but lists are found in *Bibliothecæ Americanæ Quadripartitæ* of the works in twelve such libraries, including those of Herring Creek and Nanjemoy. A book-plate was used for the parochial libraries. The inscription on a book from the St. Paul's Parish Library, Prince George's County, Maryland, is of interest as showing a broadening of Bray's original plan. The book-plate has an engraving of an angel standing on an open book and handing another open book to a half-draped figure above. From the angel's mouth proceeds a scroll with the legend: "Apoc. X. 9. Accipe librum et devora illum." Below the picture is this inscription (the words here italicized are in ink): "This book belongs to the Parochial Library of *St. Paul's* in the county of *Prince George's, Md.*

<sup>1</sup> The clergy of Maryland, in answer to certain queries propounded to them by Governor Hart in June, 1714, stated that most parishes had been furnished with parochial libraries through Bray's efforts, but that some had never received one.

*Towards rendering it a more general or lending library for the neighboring clergy to borrow the book, if they shall want it."*

After Bray's death, the interest in the libraries he had founded died out in England, and from that time to the Revolution but four new libraries were founded in the thirteen colonies. The four new libraries numbered about fifty books each, and were situated in Virginia, North Carolina, and New Jersey. The reports of the trustees would indicate that no books had been added to the libraries already established. But the library of St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore County, Maryland, now deposited in the Whittingham Memorial Library, contains books published in 1729 and 1748, which fact shows that some additions must have been made.

The people of the colonies seem to have taken comparatively little interest in adding to the libraries by the purchase of "good and godly books," and as those already in the libraries became antiquated and worn out, the libraries lost their usefulness and mouldered away in the corners. Bray was in advance of his times, but, in spite of that fact, was the author of much good to the colonists of the South. Yet the first public library movement in America failed to endure because it was built on too narrow foundations. It was rather an exotic plant than a spontaneous growth in the provinces, and it soon withered away. In Dr. Bray's plan there were two radical defects, which were sure to deprive his system of permanence: it made no provision for addition of books from time to time to these libraries, and there was no disposition on the part of the people of the colonies to maintain and increase the libraries at their own expense.

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